Golden Media UNI-BOX 9080 CRCI HD PVR COMBO Plus

A PVR Receiver with an Exceptional BlindScan Function

• Whoever designed the housing of Golden Media's UNI-BOX 9080 deserves a pat on the back. It's very pleasing to the eye and would nicely adorn any TV rack or living room cabinet. The front panel sports an elegant black see-through Plexiglas flap behind which you'll find eight buttons that can be used to fully control the UNI-BOX 9080 should the remote control go missing. You'll also find two integrated card readers as well as a CI slot behind this flap. While the card reader is only compatible with the Conax encryption system, the CI slot can communicate with every type of module, for example, Irdeto, Cryptoworks, Seca or Viaccess.

TELE satellite AWARD 02-03/2011

Golden Media UNI-BOX 9080 CRCI HD PVR COMBO Plus
Perfect family receiver but also a top choice for the satellite DXer thanks to its high-speed BlindScan function

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A VFD display can be found in the middle of the front panel and is very easy to read even if the front panel flap is closed. When the receiver is on, it shows information on the currently selected channel, the time as well as technical parameters using small icons.

Looking at the rear panel of this new Golden Media receiver is also a joy. The first thing you notice is the two tuners; our test receiver came equipped with DVB-S2 and DVB-T HDTV tuners. Since these tuners are plug-in modules, it is possible to customize the receiver with a combination of tuners that fit your needs. DVB-S2 and DVB-C as well as DVB-T and DVB-C combinations are available from the manufacturer.

An absolute must for any HDTV receiver is an HDMI output that can provide the best possible audio and video quality to the TV. In addition the manufacturer included Scart jacks (for use in Europe), six RCA jacks for YUV, stereo audio and composite video plus an RJ45 jack, an optical digital audio output, an RS232 serial interface and since this is a PVR box you'll also find a USB 2.0 port. To top it all off, the rear panel also comes with a programmable 0/12V output as well as a main power switch so that the receiver can be completely disconnected from the power source.

We were also very pleased with the included remote control. It sits comfortable in your hand plus all the buttons are legibly labeled and organized in a very logical manner. In contrast to the remote control's plastic housing, the buttons themselves are covered with a slip-free surface that makes the entire remote control comfortable to use. The excellent multi-language user manual also included in the package must also be mentioned. Even though at first glance it seemed to be somewhat unorganized, in the end the user manual was able to answer every question that popped up during our tests and should therefore be an outstanding source of information for the user at home.

All in all, we were very happy with the receiver's quality; we were impressed with its design and even with the remote control and user manual Golden Media did not spare any expense.

When the UNI-BOX 9080 is turned on for the first time, an Installation Assistant did not appear as is the case with many other receivers. But it didn't really matter; a single push of the Menu button immediately takes you to the Main Menu. And just like the elegant design of the receiver's housing, the Main Menu is just as elegant and organized. It consists of eight submenus that let you take care of all of the receiver's settings and also let you access all of the receiver's functions.

Since this is a Combo receiver with two different tuners, the receiver naturally needs to be matched to two

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different antenna setups. As mentioned before, our test receiver came with DVB-T HDTV and DVB-S2 tuners.

For DVB-T, the receiver comes preprogrammed with a list of DVB-T settings from a total of 17 different regions. Most of these regions are in Europe: Great Britain, Germany, Greece, Slovenia, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, The Czech Republic and Slovakia. There are also settings for Australia. These regional settings take into account any differences there might be from one region to another such as the frequency band used or the channel plan. Naturally you can manually scan each desired frequency in the UHF or VHF band with individual parameters. The UNI-BOX 9080 can also supply 5V at the DVB-T antenna input so that a signal amplifier could be used with an antenna without the need of an external power supply.

The red function button can be used to start a fully automatic channel scan across the entire frequency band. In our case the scan found all available DVB-T channels in 84 seconds. Unfortunately, the UNI-BOX receiver is not yet DVB-T2 compatible.

For DVB-S/S2 reception, the necessary settings and options are far more extensive. The manufacturer included a preprogrammed list of 44 European satellites. Unfortunately, Asian, American or Oceanic satellites are not to be found in the list and even the included European satellite and transponder data is not all that up to date. On the other hand, we were impressed with the variety of the available LOF and DiSEqC settings.

The UNI-BOX 9080 supports a range of DiSEqC protocols including 1.0 for the classic multifeed antenna with up to four LNBs, 1.1 for the dual reflector dish with up to 16 LNBs as well as 1.2 and 1.3 (USALS) for use with a motorized antenna. The available LOF settings were just as extensive: in addition to a universal Ku-band LNB, a C-band LNB can also be connected. Thanks to the manual LOF entry, less popular LOFs that are not preprogrammed in the receiver can be manually entered.

If you want to use this receiver with an SCR system, you're in luck: the UNI-BOX 9080 supports single-cable solutions and lets you define all its required parameters. The extensive LNB settings are expanded even more with the ability to increase the LNB supply voltage by 0.5V. This is a great idea! If your cable run to the antenna is unusually long, increasing the LNB supply voltage by just 0.5V would be enough to overcome any larger-than-normal voltage drop that would occur in the cable.

An especially interesting feature for those who have older satellite systems would be the 0/12V programmable RCA output on the back of the receiver. It can be individually activated or deactivated via the settings menu for every satellite entry.

In general we noticed with the UNI-BOX 9080 that the manufacturer at a variety of points in the operating concept of the receiver incorporated some really wonderful ideas and bonus features that make it all the more easier for the end user to play with this box. In the case of satellite settings, it would be the automatic DiSEqC recognition.

Who hasn't seen this problem? The signals of multiple satellites are delivered by a DiSEqC switch with a single cable to the receiver but then you can't quite remember which satellite is connected to what DiSEqC port. For the Golden Media UNI-BOX 9080 this is no problem at all; with the push of one button, the receiver automatically looks at each port to identify which port the currently selected satellite is connected to. This feature functioned quickly and reliably during our tests. An especially useful feature is the audible signal tone that can be activated so that it isn't necessary to repeatedly look at the TV screen while aligning the antenna.

Once all of the settings are correctly entered and the receiver itself has been matched to the antenna system, the next step would be the channel scan. The channel scan is available in three different modes: satellite scan, manual transponder scan and of course the BlindScan. Even though the receiver comes with two CI slots and two integrated card readers, the channel scan can be limited to only FTA (free) channels. You can also further limit the scan to TV or radio only with one button-push on the remote control. Golden Media also thought ahead when it came to the Network scan; in our tests an automatic scan of the HOT-BIRD satellites at 13° east was completed in just over six minutes and yielded 1427 TV channels and 395 radio channels.

With that in mind, we wanted to take a closer look at the DVB-S2 tuner. There were no hiccups whether it was SCPC reception with very low symbolrates or whether it was reception of very weak signals. It easily handled our SCPC test transponder with a symbolrate of 1.240 Ms/sec. on INTELSAT 14 at 45° west as well as two very weak transponders on BADR at 26° east while other similar receivers hardly even recognized those signals.

Over the past several years we've tested quite a variety of BlindScan receivers here

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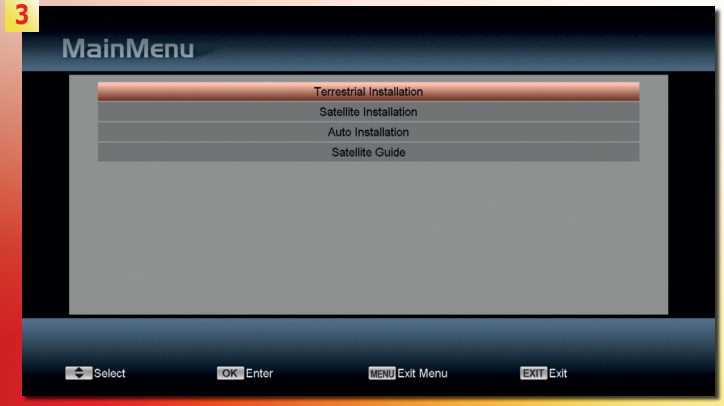

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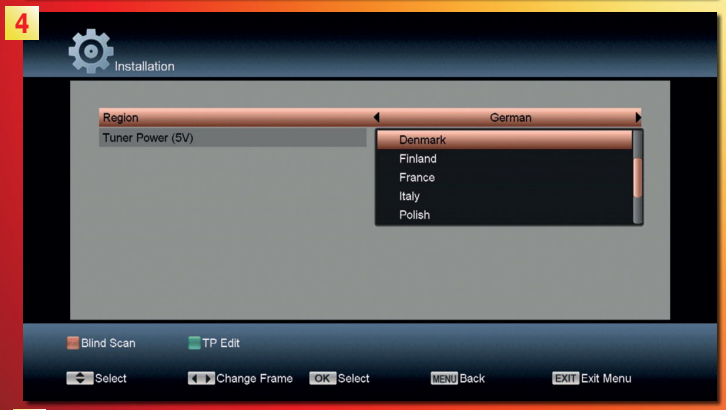

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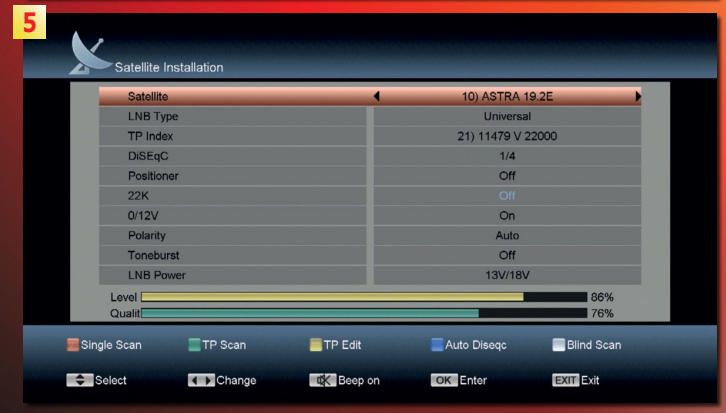

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at TELE-satellite but it's safe to say that the UNI-BOX 9080 can be ranked as one of the best. We started a BlindScan on HOTBIRD at 13° east and were surprised that it finished the task in just about seven minutes. It found 1479 TV channels and 430 radio channels. At first we thought the receiver worked off of a prepared channel list; there was no other way to explain this exceptional result in such a short time. So, we then moved our roof antenna to another satellite and started a new BlindScan. The UNI-BOX 9080 identified 287 TV channels and 143 radio channels on TÜRKSAT at 42° east; even the narrowband SCPC transponders were recognized and stored in the channel list.

To compare, we then performed a channel scan without the BlindScan function using only the preprogrammed transponder data from the manufacturer and achieved very meager results: only 25 TV and 3 radio channels were found on TÜRKSAT. Additional tests of the BlindScan function, for example, on EUTELSAT 36° east, confirm its incredible speed and precision; even the narrowest bandwidth SCPC transponder was easily recognized and processed. A more precise presentation of the BlindScan test results can be seen in Table 1. The only drawback to the BlindScan function: you can't set a specific frequency range nor can you limit the scan to only one polarization. Nevertheless, it's a function that's an absolute 'must have' for every DXer and feed-hunter.

The entire installation process is rounded off by two more outstanding features: the first is the sub-menu "Automatic Installation". This feature takes much of the setup work away from the end-user. In this mode the receiver attempts to identify on its own what satellites – even through a DiSEqC multi-switch – can be received with the available equipment. The automatic channel scan of all the receivable satellites can be started with the push of just one button. This feature worked very well in our tests and in addition to the usual suspects such as ASTRA 19.2° east and HOTBIRD 13.0° east, ASTRA2 at 28.2° east and BADR at 26° east were also recognized without any problems.

The second feature is an azimuth and elevation calculator. You have to enter in your local coordinates manually but they can easily be found with Google maps or some other Internet service. In return though, you'll get all the necessary parameters to align your satellite antenna.

Once the UNI-BOX 9080 has been set up with all the local parameters, it would be a good idea to take care of all

HOTBIRD 13° Ost	7 Minutes	1479 TV and 430 Radio Channels
TÜRKSAT 42° Ost	8 Minutes	287 TV and 143 Radio Channels
EUTELSAT 36° Ost	10 Minutes	35 TV and 3 Radio Channels
EXPRESS AM44 11° West	4 Minutes	19 TV and 1 Radio Channels

Table 1: BlindScan Results

1. Golden Media UNI-BOX 9080 Start Screen
2. The clear and concise Main Menu
3. Separate settings for DVB-S/2 und DVB-T Reception
4. Region selection for DVB-T reception
5. The extensive settings capabilities in DVB-S/2 mode

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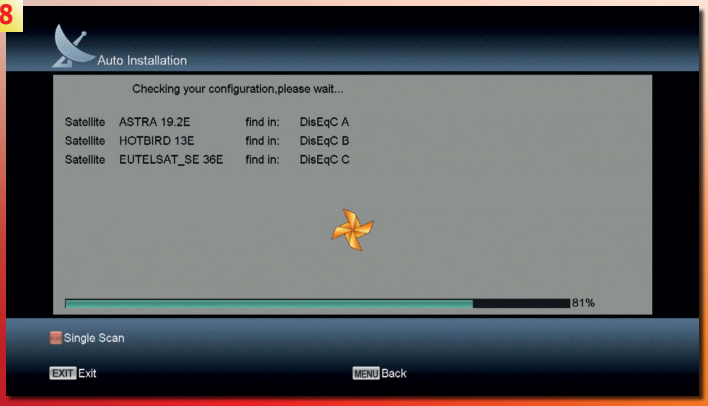
Auto Installation
Checking your configuration,please wait...
Satellite ASTRA 19.2E find in: DisEqC A
Satellite HOTBIRD 13E find in: DisEqC B
Satellite EUTELSAT_SE 36E find in: DisEqC C
81%
Single Scan
EXIT Exit MENU Back

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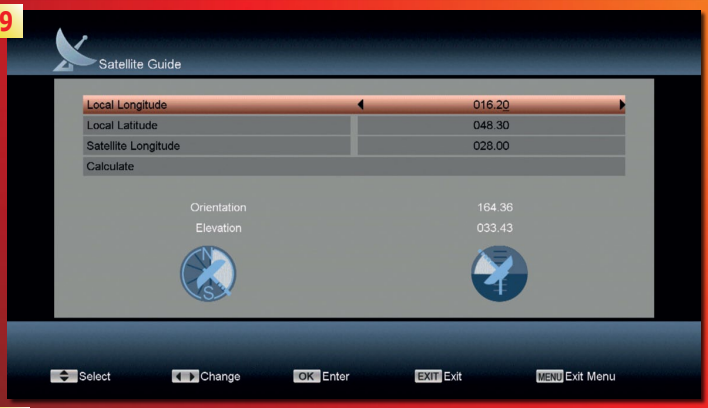

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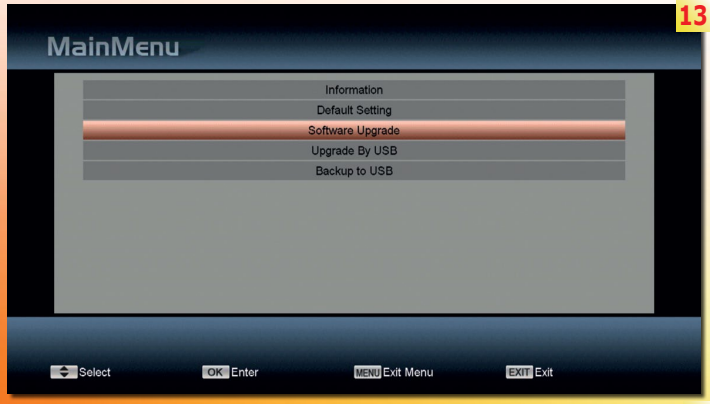

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Storage Information
USB Disk : 968.75 M bytes
Volume: C:
Total Size: 968.74 M bytes
Free Size: 951.66 M bytes
Rec Size: 0 bytes
TMS Size: 0 bytes
File System: NTFS
HDD Format Dvr Setting
Change Frame MENU Back EXIT Exit Menu

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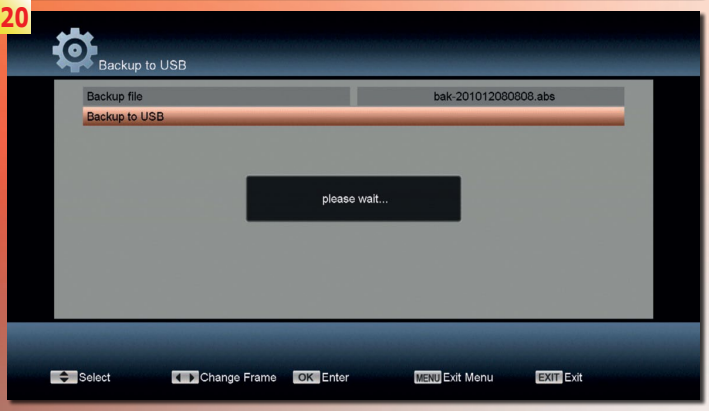

6. The UNI-BOX 9080 supports SCR single-cable solutions
7. Channel scan options
8. Automatic recognition of receivable satellites
9. Calculation of Azimuth and Elevation
10. Language selection
11. Eight timer positions are available
12. Various settings possibilities
13. Software update
14. Detailed information on the free space of a USD device
15. Network parameters can be set either via DHCP or manually
16. DVB-T channel scan
17. HD channels and encrypted programs are identified in the channel list by their own icons
18. Satellite selection
19. Channel list restricted to Irdeto encrypted channels only
20. Saving the channel list and all settings to a USB Stick
21. Channel list search function
22. Info bar with data on the current and upcoming program
23. Current programs in the EPG overview

the user-defined settings as well as matching the TV to the receiver setup. The receiver's OSD can communicate with you in English, German, French, Italian, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Portuguese, Arabic, Polish, Ukrainian, Persian, Romanian, Hungarian, Croatian, Bulgarian, Czech, Indonesian, Slovenian, Swedish, Slovakian as well as a few other languages.

As you would expect with any good DVB-S2 receiver, the internal real time clock (RTC) is automatically set via the satellite signal. The user, however, needs to set the local time difference from GMT as well as activate or deactivate daylight savings time (summer time).

We were surprised at the extensive on-screen display settings that were available. In addition to standard parameters such as display timeout, display position or transparency, you can also set brightness, contrast and color saturation. Be careful in adjusting these settings though, as they also affect the displayed TV picture.

When connected to an LCD or plasma TV, the UNI-BOX 9080 can present the video signal via the HDMI output in 480p, 576p, 720p 50 Hz, 720p 60 Hz,1080i 50 Hz and 1080i 60 Hz. If you can't or don't want to use the HDMI output, the signal is also available in RGB and YUV. You can also select how a 4:3 signal can be displayed on a 16:9 screen. Using a dedicated button on the remote control, the video format can be changed to match the currently received signal.

All of these settings capabilities are topped off with the ability to select a fast or regular standby mode. In fast standby mode, the receiver uses a little more power but comes out of standby much more quickly than in regular mode. Additionally, the VFD display can be completely turned off in standby mode if desired.

Once the channel list has been filled (8000 max) with thousands of channels thanks to the speedy BlindScan feature, some organization will be needed. For this task the UNI-BOX 9080 comes with numerous possibilities all presented in a clear and easy-to-understand menu. Just like with the EPG display and the channel list, the red function button is used to limit the number of displayed channels. It can be set to show only those channels on a specific satellite, those using a specific encryption system or those from a specific provider. The list can also be set to display only HD channels as well as only those channels from one or the other tuner. The remaining channels can be renamed, moved, deleted, locked with a PIN code or skipped over.

Especially useful is the ability to edit entire transponders all at once, greatly simplifying this task. Thanks to the powerful search function, individual channels can be found simply by entering the first few letters of the channel name. Channels can also be moved into one of 32 Favorites lists for easy access later. The channel list editing features are also available in the Favorites lists.

Once all the settings have been dealt with, the receiver has been matched to the antenna system and the channel list has been filled, you can finally leave the Main Menu. The UNI-BOX 9080 will then automatically switch over to the first available channel.

Every time you change a channel, a very detailed Info bar appears momentarily that

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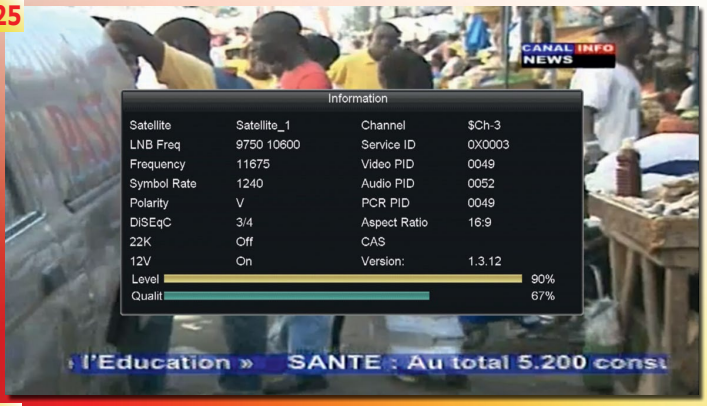

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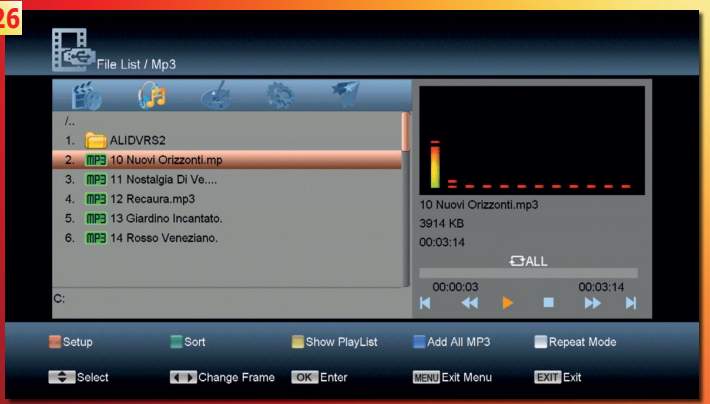

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24. The REC button can mark programs for recording directly in the EPG
25. Display of the technical parameters of a channel with a symbolrate of only 1.240 Ms/sec.
26. MP3 playback
27. JPEG display

provides information on the current and upcoming channel. The icons that appear let the user know what additional features are included by the provider. For example, this could be teletext, subtitles, various languages and EPG data to name a few. As is typical with every DVB receiver, a push of the Info button displays expanded programming information with a description of the program assuming of course that this data is made available by the provider.

For those more technically oriented, even more information is available by pressing the red function button: from PIDs all the way to signal strength and quality, dozens of parameters are displayed that would raise the pulse of any technician or DXer.

As far as this receiver's picture and audio quality are concerned, we were very impressed during our tests regardless whether it was an HD or SD channel. Channel switching times were also very good and were about one second between two different transponders.

The electronic program guide (EPG) also turned out very well. It can be accessed from a dedicated button on the remote control and is available in four different modes:

Current – the current EPG data from five channels is displayed

Next – the EPG data of the next program is shown for five channels

More – EPG data in table format for five channels

Schedule – in this mode the channel list is shown on the left side while the EPG data from the next couple of weeks for the currently selected channel is shown on the right side.

It doesn't matter which of the four modes you select, they are all put together in an organized fashion and correctly present the EPG data. Thanks to the red function button, the displayed channels can once again be reduced to a specific satellite, package or Favorites. With the help of the yellow function button as well as the REC button, timer entries can be setup directly from the EPG. Up to eight timer settings are available. It is also possible to set these timers to work on a daily, weekly, monthly, weekday or weekend basis. So, it really doesn't matter anymore when your favorite TV shows are shown, this outstanding timer function won't let you miss any upcoming episodes.

If you use the receiver without an attached hard drive and therefore can't record any programs, you can use the timer function to provide a user-settable reminder as to when to switch over to the desired channel.

The channel list of the Golden Media UNI-BOX 908 also turned out quite well. It can be displayed with the single push of the OK button. In the OSD settings you can select whether to show the channel list in one, two or three columns. A feature that we don't see very often is the ability to use the colored function buttons to display the EPG data of a channel directly from the channel list. What could be better than skimming through the channel list and pushing a single button to read more about the currently selected program? Deciding what to watch couldn't be any easier than this. The red function button can also be used to reduce the channel list to a certain satellite, provider or content. This same button can also be used to switch between the two reception modes; in our case it was DVB-T HDTV and DVB-S2. If you want to make a small change to the channel list while the receiver is in operation, the UNI-BOX 9080 provides the necessary tools for this task in a somewhat slimmed down graphical version. The blue function button provides order in the channel list. It can be used to sort the

list based on free or encrypted channels, encryption mode as well as alphabetically. All of these channel list features are available not only in TV mode but also in radio mode. Switching between modes is handled by pushing a button on the remote control. Thanks to the 32 Favorites lists, thousands of channels can be properly organized. Each family member can customize their own personal Favorites list with their favorite channels.

The two internal card readers and the CI slots had to also prove themselves using a variety of modules and cards. Unfortunately, the card readers are only Conax compatible and are therefore limited in their use.

As the name of the receiver suggests, this box becomes a true PVR receiver once an external storage device such as a USB hard drive or USB stick is attached. Thanks to the speedy USB 2.0 connection, high resolution content can be recorded without any problems.

Naturally, the PVR can be used with both tuners regardless of what path the content uses to get into the receiver. If you're not familiar with the term PVR, we'd like to take a moment and provide a brief explanation. The received DVB signal is stored digitally and without any signal degradation on an internal or, in our case, external storage device. During playback, all of the features you have come to know such as Pause and Fast-Forward/Rewind at various speeds are available. Along with this is the Time Shift feature that lets you pause a live transmission and then restart it from the point where it was stopped when you're ready to continue watching. So, if for example a telephone call interrupts the movie you were watching, you can pause the movie, carry on your telephone conversation and then continue watching that movie after hanging up the phone without missing a thing.

The UNI-BOX 9080 lets you time shift and record another channel at the same time but it would require a sufficiently fast storage device which can be checked using the integrated speed test function. The external storage devices can be formatted in either FAT or NTFS. Obviously the fact that this would delete any content already on them is implied and doesn't need to be expanded on here. Since Golden Media opted for external storage devices with the UNI-BOX 9080, recorded content can be easily transferred to a PC where you can then, for example, convert it to a DVD.

As with most PVR receivers, the Golden Media box can also playback MP3 music and display your vacation pictures that were previously stored on an external storage device. In our tests, as with everything else so far, this feature functioned perfectly.

These external storage devices need not only be used for the PVR function or for storing MP3 and picture data, but they can also be used to comfortably install new firmware as well as saving the receiver settings and the channel list. And let's not forget that the firmware can also be updated via DVB-S, DVB-T, USB and the RS232 interface, but in the end, the Internet is the most widely used update method. The required network parameters can be obtained by the receiver automatically via DHPC from a local network router or they can be manually entered by the user.

And to top it all off, the UNI-BOX 9080 also comes with three integrated video games that you can use to pass the time during those long commercial breaks.

We really enjoyed putting the new UNI-BOX 9080 to the test here at our test center. It is an extremely user-friendly receiver with every detail well thought out. It makes a perfect living room receiver for the entire family while its large selection of features, its stable operating software and above all its outstanding BlindScan function also make it very interesting for the professional user. Thanks to its BlindScan function, this receiver has found a permanent home here in our test lab.

Expert Opinion

Thomas Haring
TELE-satellite
Test Center
Austria

+

As a Combo receiver, the UNI-BOX 9080 can receive DVB signals two different ways. The two integrated CI slots and card readers allow operation with a variety of encryption systems. The firmware did not give us any problems during our tests.

Up to 8000 channels can be stored in the receiver's channel memory; this is sufficiently large enough so that this receiver can easily be connected to a motorized antenna system. SCR single-cable solutions are supported as are all the different DiSEqC protocols.

Both the DVB-T and DVB-S2 tuners are extremely sensitive; in DVB-S2 mode the receiver had no trouble handling narrowband SCPC signals or very weak signals.

The outstanding BlindScan function deserves especially high praise!

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Unfortunately, the included satellite and transponder data is not all that up to date and there are only eight free timer positions available.

ENERGY
DIAGRAM

Mode	Apparent	Active	Factor
Regular StandBy	5 W	2 W	0.4
Active	**27 W**	**15 W**	**0.55**
Fast StandBy	25 W	13 W	0.52

First 15 minutes: StandBy (regular) - Second 15 minutes: Receiver boot-up, then active operation with channel switching, recording, playback, etc. - Third 15 minutes: Fast StandBy

TECHNICAL
DATA

Distributor	Golden Media, Cynextra GmbH Stuttgarter Straße 36, D-73635 Rudersberg
Tel.	+49 (0) 7183 / 30 777-0
Fax	+49 (0) 7183 / 30 777-20
E-Mail	info@cynextra.com
Website	www.golden-media.net
Model	Golden Media UNI-BOX 9080 CRCI HD PVR COMBO Plus
Function	Digital HDTV dual tuner PVR receiver with various Features & Blindscan, available tuners DVB-T HDTV, DVB-C, DVB-S/S2
Channel Memory	8000
Input range DVB-T	170-230 MHz, 470-860 MHz
RF-input level DVB-T	-70dBm to -8dBm
Demodulation DVB-T	COFDM 2K/8K
Input range DVB-S/2	950-2150 MHz
Signal level DVB-S/2	-65dBm to -25 dBm
SCPC compatible	yes
DiSEqC	1.0 / 1.1 / 1.2 / 1.3
USALS	yes
HDMI output	yes
Scart connector	yes
Audio/Video outputs	6x RCA
Component video output	yes
S-Video output	no
UHF modulator	no
0/12V connector	yes
Digital audio output	yes
EPG	yes
C/Ku-band compatible	yes
PVR-function	yes
USB 2.0 connector	yes
Ethernet	yes
E-SATA	no
Power supply	100-250V AC 50/60Hz
Power consumption	40W max.
Dimensions	300x231x64mm
Weight	2kg
Operating temperature	0°C to 45°C